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## Iowa FSA Newsletter

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To find your local  
USDA Service Center  
go to  
<http://offices.usda.gov>.

## USDA Partners with Farmers and Ranchers to Protect More Than 500,000 Acres of Working Grasslands

USDA will accept more than 504,000 acres that were offered by producers during the recent ranking period for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Grasslands enrollment. Through the voluntary CRP Grasslands program, grasslands threatened by development or conversion to row crops are maintained as livestock grazing areas, while providing important conservation benefits.

USDA will accept more than 2,100 offers totaling more than 504,000 acres across 34 states. Over 70 percent of the acres are from beginning farmers, veterans and underserved producers. About two-thirds of the acres are in counties with the highest threat for conversion. Additionally, nearly 60 percent of the acres are in wildlife priority areas and nearly three-fourths of the acres will have a wildlife-focused conservation plan as part of the operation.

USDA is also reminding producers that it is still accepting additional offers for CRP Grasslands. The current ranking period that closes on Dec. 16, also includes a new CRP Grasslands practice specifically tailored for small-scale livestock grazing operations to encourage broader participation. Small livestock operations with 100 or fewer head of grazing dairy cows (or the equivalent) can submit applications to enroll up to 200 acres of grasslands per farm. USDA's goal is to enroll up to additional 200,000 acres. The new practice for small-scale livestock grazing operations encourages greater diversity geographically and in all types of livestock operation. Small livestock operations are encouraged to contact their local Farm Service Agency office to learn more about this program before Dec. 16, to be considered as part of the current ranking period.

Small livestock operations or other farming and ranching operations interested in participating in CRP Grasslands should contact their local FSA office. To find your local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>. To learn more about FSA's conservation programs, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation).

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## USDA Encourages Producers to Consider Risk Protection Coverage before Crop Sales Deadlines

The Farm Service Agency encourages producers to examine available USDA crop risk protection options, including federal crop insurance and Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage, before the applicable crop sales deadline.

Producers are reminded that crops not covered by insurance may be eligible for NAP. The 2014 Farm Bill expanded NAP to include higher levels of protection. Beginning, underserved and limited resource farmers are now eligible for free catastrophic level coverage, as well as discounted premiums for additional levels of protection."

Federal crop insurance covers crop losses from natural adversities such as drought, hail and excessive moisture. NAP covers losses from natural disasters on crops for which no permanent federal crop insurance program is available, including perennial grass forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy, and industrial crops.

USDA has partnered with Michigan State University and the University of Illinois to create an online tool at [www.fsa.usda.gov/nap](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nap) that allows producers to determine whether their crops are eligible for federal crop insurance or NAP and to explore the best level of protection for their operation. NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production, with higher levels of coverage, up to 65 percent of their expected production at 100 percent of the average market price, including coverage for organics and crops marketed directly to consumers.

Deadlines for coverage vary by state and crop. To learn more about NAP visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/nap](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nap) or contact your local USDA Service Center. To find your local USDA Service Centers go to <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Federal crop insurance coverage is sold and delivered solely through private insurance agents. Agent lists are available at all USDA Service Centers or at USDA's online Agent Locator: <http://prodwebnlb.rma.usda.gov/apps/AgentLocator/#>. Producers can use the USDA Cost Estimator, <https://ewebapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/costestimator/Default.aspx>, to predict insurance premium costs.

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## Producers are Reminded to Complete NASS Crop Surveys

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) Iowa Field Office is currently surveying a sample of producers to determine State and county level harvested acreage, yield, and production of major crops. If you are one of the producers contacted to complete a 2016 yield survey, we encourage your participation as many USDA agencies including the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Risk Management Agency (RMA) use the NASS yield data for their programs.

FSA uses NASS county yield data for farm credit, conservation, disaster, loan, and commodity programs. Under the 2014 Farm Bill, FSA uses the NASS county yield data to calculate Agriculture Risk Coverage – County (ARC-CO) benchmark and current year revenues while the NASS county yield data have been used for years by RMA to administer the crop insurance programs. The information is also used extensively by state, local, and national leaders to address agricultural related issues that may impact producers.

As you can see, the information NASS provides is used extensively throughout the agricultural industry. By responding to NASS surveys, you help ensure that all areas of the State are represented and that the published numbers are as accurate as possible. You will also play an active role in making sure farm programs are equitable implemented in your county.

NASS gathers data from farmers by either mail, phone or in person. Any information you provide is kept confidential and protected by federal law. NASS publishes only aggregate-level data, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified.

State level data for Iowa will be published on January 12, 2017. County level data for the corn and soybean crops will be released on February 23, 2017. All reports will be available on the internet at [www.nass.usda.gov](http://www.nass.usda.gov). If you have any questions about how to complete a survey from the NASS Iowa Field Office, please call 1-800-772-0825.

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## Loan Servicing

There are options for Farm Service Agency loan customers during financial stress. If you are a borrower who is unable to make payments on a loan, contact your local FSA Farm Loan Manager to learn about the options available to you.

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## USDA Climate Hub Building Block: Nitrogen Stewardship

USDA Climate Hubs are working with farmers, livestock producers, pasture and forest landowners to effectively partner in ways to help mitigate and adapt to a changing climate. Next in our series on the 10 Building Blocks for Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry is Nitrogen Stewardship.

Within the United States, agriculture is a significant source of nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) emissions—a greenhouse gas (GHG) that has a global warming potential 250 times more than carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). In 2013, cropland agriculture released approximately 136 MMTCO<sub>2</sub>e (Million Metric Tons of Carbon Dioxide-Equivalent) in direct N<sub>2</sub>O emissions. More than half of these N<sub>2</sub>O emissions are from synthetic fertilizers and organic amendments. Improved nitrogen management practices can reduce emissions from these sources.

The primary practice used in the Nitrogen Stewardship Building Block to reduce GHG emissions involves the 4Rs: right source, right rate, right time, and right place. The 4Rs come from the NRCS Conservation Practice Standard (CPS) Nutrient Management (590). To read more about Nitrogen Stewardship click the following link or copy and paste the link into your web browser:

[http://www.usda.gov/oce/climate\\_change/building\\_blocks/2\\_NitrogenStewardship.pdf](http://www.usda.gov/oce/climate_change/building_blocks/2_NitrogenStewardship.pdf)

For more information about the USDA Climate Hubs click here: <http://www.climatehubs.oce.usda.gov/>.

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## Enrollment Period for Safety Net Coverage in 2017 Announced

Producers on farms with base acres under the safety net programs established by the 2014 Farm Bill, known as the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, can begin visiting FSA county offices starting Nov. 1, 2016, to sign contracts and enroll for the 2017 crop year. The enrollment period will continue until Aug. 1, 2017.

Since shares and ownership of a farm can change year-to-year, producers on the farm must enroll by signing a contract each program year.

If a farm is not enrolled during the 2017 enrollment period, the producers on that farm will not be eligible for financial assistance from the ARC or PLC programs for the 2017 crop should crop prices or farm revenues fall below the historical price or revenue benchmarks established by the program. Producers who made their elections in 2015 must still enroll during the 2017 enrollment period.

The ARC and PLC programs were authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill and offer a safety net to agricultural producers when there is a substantial drop in prices or revenues for covered commodities. Covered commodities include barley,

canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium grain rice (which includes short grain and sweet rice), safflower seed, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat. Upland cotton is no longer a covered commodity. For more details regarding these programs, go to [www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc).

For more information, producers are encouraged to visit their local FSA office. To find a local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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## USDA to Provide Agricultural Credit Training, Expand Opportunities for Farmer Veterans and Beginning Farmers

USDA is partnering with the Farmer Veteran Coalition (FVC) to conduct agricultural credit training sessions in the Midwest for military veterans and beginning farmers and ranchers. States under consideration to host the workshops include Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, and Nebraska.

These workshops will provide individuals interested in farming as a career, including military veterans, with methods to improve business planning and financial skills, and improve understanding of the risk management tools that can help small farm operations.

Other partners include Niman Ranch a community network of more than 700 independent family farmers and ranchers, and the Farm Credit Council and the Farm Credit System, which provides loans, leases and financial services to farmers, ranchers and rural businesses across the United States. The workshops will also include assistance with credit applications and introductions to local or regional food markets.

To learn more about veterans in agriculture, visit [www.usda.gov/veterans](http://www.usda.gov/veterans). Visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans) or your local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office to learn more about FSA's farm loan programs. To find your local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>. More information also is available from the Farmer Veteran Coalition at [www.farmvetco.org](http://www.farmvetco.org).

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